

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE 6AIR FORCE TIMES
23 July 1984

Gen. Rogers: Show Spy Photos in Europe Debate

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SHAPE, Belgium — Gen. Bernard W. Rogers (USA), commander of NATO forces in Europe, wants intelligence photographs released to show the offensive nature of the Soviet military buildup and to bolster U.S. arguments that Europeans need to do more to defend themselves.

Rogers, in a recent interview with American reporters, said he has tried since 1980 to win public release of intelligence photographs to sway European public opinion but "the damn intelligence community won every time."

"I wish we could have spent the afternoon here just showing you photographs from overhead platforms . . . How we can see the offensive orientation of the Warsaw Pact," Rogers said.

"They've got miles and miles and miles of petroleum pipelines stockpiled along the western edge of the Soviet Union. And they've got acres and acres and acres, in various locations, of river-crossing equipment," he said. "It isn't to cross rivers going east. It isn't to have pipelines going back toward Moscow. It's to head west, you see."

Rogers said he sympathizes with the concerns of the U.S. intelligence community that the Soviets not learn about the quality of the overhead surveillance. "It's not that the Soviets don't know we're doing it. It's that they may not know how damn well we're doing it," he said.

But, Rogers said he considers it's more important "to convince the Western European public that there's credibility that undergirds our assessment and to break down this complacency and the wishful thinking (about Soviet intentions)."

Since 1978, Rogers has served in the dual post of Supreme Allied Commander, Europe for NATO

and Commander in Chief, Europe within the U.S. command structure. He said he has asked for the release of seven intelligence photographs as SACEUR "knowing as CINCEUR that they have it."

Rogers said that he pressed the point again with Washington officials after the government recently released a classified overhead photograph showing communist military activity in Nicaragua.

"Well, I went back again on that one and said, 'You know, there must be a nuance here on overhead platforms which is lost on me. What's the difference between that kind of platform from another kind of overhead platform?'"

Rogers said that effort also failed. "It was more important, I guess, to show those things in Nicaragua at that time from an overhead platform . . . than it was to convince the West Europeans."

Some Europeans, he said, still believe that the Soviet deployment of the SS-20 intermediate-range missiles "is just a myth of the United States' imagination foisted off on the public so we can make a greater case for bringing in new nuclear weapons."

"Well," Rogers said, "we know it's not so. But I can tell you a line drawing (of the SS-20 or Soviet Backfire bomber) in a booklet called *Soviet Military Power* isn't very damn impressive."

Soviet Military Power is a glossy publication published annually by the Pentagon since 1981 to show a need for larger defense budgets. It has included previously classified photographs of Soviet weaponry, but depicts the SS-20 and other advanced systems with artists' conceptions instead.

President Reagan, in his so-called "Star Wars" speech of March 1983, used aerial photographs, previously classified as secret, to show Soviet military activity in Central America and the Caribbean basin.

Apparently the photographs Rogers wants released, of Soviet

weaponary and supplies deep inside the Soviet bloc, were taken by satellites.

"If (Sen.) Sam Nunn wants to help us in our effort here in Western Europe, let him also . . . continue to push to get release of the documentation we have to the public here," Rogers said.

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